Mrs. Kennedy Action to Halt Book Told

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NEW YORK (AP)—Author Jim Bishop said yesterday that Mrs. John F. Kennedy had attempted to prevent him from writing a book on the assassination of President Kennedy.

Bishop said Mrs. Kennedy had asked him twice by letter two years ago to drop plans for a book to be called "The Day Kennedy Was Shot." When he declined, he said the Kennedy family silenced most sources and brought pressure on his publisher, Bennett Cerf of Random House.

Cerf confirmed that Mrs. Kennedy had asked him not to publish the book.

The former First Lady informed him Bishop said, that she had "hired" author William Manchester to write the history of the assassination. Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," is due for publication in January by Harper & Row.

The attempts to stop Bishop's book were disclosed Friday by Jack Anderson, an associate of Washington syndicated columnist Drew Pearson.

Mrs. Kennedy could not be reached for comment on the column or on the statements by Bishop and Cerf.

Bishop, in a telephone interview from his home in Hallandale, Fla., said Mrs. Kennedy had sent him a handwritten letter dated Sept. 17, 1964, in which she asked him "to please not go ahead with your intended book, 'The Day Kennedy Was Shot.' The idea of it is so distressing to me, I can't bear to think of seeing—or of seeing advertised—a book with that name and subject—one that my children might see or someone might mention to them."

She wrote that she had "hired" Manchester "to protect President Kennedy and the truth."

She added: "He was to interrogate everyone who had any connection with those days—and if I decide the book should never be published—then Mr. Manchester will be reimbursed for his time. Or if I decide it should be known—I will decide when it should be published."

When Bishop asked Mrs. Kennedy not to "stand in the doorway of history," she replied: "None of the people connected with November 22d will speak to anyone but Mr. Manchester. That is my wish, and it is theirs also."

Bishop said he had made several attempts to interview persons connected with the assassination — as a test — and was turned down. He said in each case the person had told him they had been asked by the Kennedys not to discuss the assassination.

Bishop said that since he had completed the research for "A Day in the Life of President Kennedy" only 28 days before the assassination, he had expected "the same cooperation on this book as before."

He said he had not found many people, however, who were willing to talk about the assassination.

He said he had expected to have the book ready in about two years. He is currently working on "A Day in the Life of President Johnson."

Cerf said, "Mrs. Kennedy did object to his (Bishop's) doing a book on the assassination and she asked me not to publish it. I told her that if we didn't, 50 other publishers would be happy to."

Bishop said he expected Manchester's book "to be a very fine book, but it must be borne in mind that this is a book that has passed the scrutiny of the Kennedy's."